

enrolled in school. There are many civilian-military projects under way, and infrastructure reconstruction is beginning to reappear. The Coalition forces have changed the lives of the Afghans and are providing them with opportunities that they never dreamed they could have.

Mr. Speaker, in Afghanistan, we met with interim President Hamid Karzai. He was effusive in his thanks to America and the work of U.S. troops. In particular, he praised the work of Oklahoma's 45th Infantry Brigade that has worked so hard to train the Afghan Army. This is just one example of the countless accomplishments of our citizen soldiers from across our Nation. The Afghani Army is now fighting hard and performing well in the hunt for al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Mr. Speaker, I do not pretend to know when our global war on terrorism will end. This is not a war we sought. We engaged in hostilities only after being attacked. This is a war which has far-reaching implications and will determine the kind of world we leave for our children and grandchildren.

America has a clear choice. We can go the way of some who suggest that we withdraw into isolationism, or we can secure the peace for our progeny by expanding the frontiers of liberty and democracy into the Middle East. While the debate surrounding our actions is legitimate, I truly believe that the answer is clear if one takes the time to look at the implications of not vigorously prosecuting this war. To be secure at home, we must act forcefully abroad. In the war on terror, "fortune favors the bold."

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that our servicemen and citizen soldiers are doing fine work in representing the very best America has to offer.

THREATS MADE BY AZERBAIJAN AGAINST ARMENIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring attention to recent statements made by high-ranking government officials in Azerbaijan that threaten the security of Armenia as well as the efforts towards a peaceful settlement over the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

This issue, if not compellingly addressed by the administration, has the potential to undermine U.S. interests and American values in the strategically important Caucasus region.

I refer to the recent remarks made by officials in the government of President Aliyev calling into question the very existence of Armenia. For example, as reported by Radio Free Europe, the Azerbaijani Defense Minister spokesman called for Azerbaijan's takeover of the entire territory of Armenia and removal of the entire Armenian population from the Caucasus. He

went so far as to say, "Within the next 25 years there will exist no state of Armenia in the south Caucasus." Given Azerbaijan's history of aggression against Armenians, these remarks cannot be dismissed as mere rhetoric.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan recently blocked key NATO exercises in the country, due to their opposition towards having Armenian officers taking part in the exercises. In fact, in June 2003, Armenia served as the host country for similar exercises, to which Azerbaijani military forces were invited, yet refused to participate. This year, Armenia was one of several dozen countries due to participate, yet the initiative was blocked by Azerbaijan, which is continuing its efforts to undermine the prospects for peace in the Caucasus region.

Azerbaijan's threats again Armenia's survival reinforce our commitment to maintaining parity in U.S. military aid to Armenia and Azerbaijan. This arrangement means even more today than when it was first put in place, particularly in light of Baku's increasingly aggressive posture towards Armenia. Any tilt in military spending towards Azerbaijan could, in our view, destabilize the region by emboldening the new Azerbaijani leadership to continue their threats to impose a military solution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

Just last week, the Republic of Armenia celebrated Independence Day marking 13 years of freedom from Soviet rule. We have seen considerable economic growth in the country. Despite the continuing illegal blockade by Turkey and Azerbaijan, a recent Wall Street Journal study found that Armenia remains the most economically free nation in the region. Today, Armenia is steadfast in its support of the U.S., as exhibited by their recent announcement of plans to send a unit of deminers, doctors and 50 trucks, including staff and drivers, to assist the Coalition forces in Iraq.

It is critical to note that Armenia is today, as it has always been, committed to the peace process and the terms agreed to in the Key West summit. Since the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan conflict, Armenia has been committed to finding a peaceful resolution. Moreover, I cannot stress enough the crucial role that the U.S. plays in the negotiations over Nagorno-Karabagh to help the people of this region find a lasting and equitable peace. These threats by Azerbaijan undermine these efforts and seriously complicate our diplomacy in the region. A failure on our part to forcefully and publicly confront the Azerbaijan government over these destabilizing threats would, in our view, send extremely dangerous signals to Azerbaijan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the United States takes action to condemn these remarks by the Azerbaijani government, and that we here in this Chamber do everything we can to en-

sure that all parties involved in this conflict make a genuine commitment towards peace and stability in the region.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. NORWOOD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

TRANSLATION BACKLOG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to extend the remarks of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) where he talked about what this Congress has been doing. I think we also should be afraid of what this Congress is not doing. I would like to talk this evening for just a few minutes about an Inspector General's report which has been issued that looked at the behavior of the FBI and their translation of intelligence tapes that they were gathering since September 11.

Now, we found out on September 10, 2001, the day before the horrendous attacks in New York and Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon, that a couple of conversations that were intercepted by the National Security Agency had a couple of messages. One said "Tomorrow is zero hour." Another said, "The match is about to begin."

The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that these messages were not translated into English to be analyzed by the FBI until several days later. So this Congress and this President decided to slightly increase the funding for interpreters and linguists to be able to help gather some of this information because if we were able to gather the information and translate it, we would know what the enemy was thinking.

So the FBI Inspector General did a report analyzing where we are today, several years later. Checked us out. Mr. Speaker, 120,000 hours of tape, of potentially valuable terrorism-related